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Anne Heggveit Hamilton

Born: 1939

Anne Heggveit's Gold Medal in the Olympic Slalom at Squaw Valley was among the principal reasons the 8th Winter Games were an unqualified success for North American skisport. She won the Olympic Slalom by a margin of 3.3 seconds over Silver Medalist Betsy Snite of the U.S.A. and a full seven seconds ahead of Bronze Medalist Barbi Henneberger of Germany.

Born in Ottawa, Canada, Dorothy Anne Heggveit won her first race at seven years of age. This was a ladies' senior and combined event at Wakefield, Quebec. At nine she placed second in the Central Canadian Championships; at ten she won the Ontario Slalom and Combined; at 13 she had won all local senior ladies' events, and in 1953, at 14 years of age, she was selected a member of the Canadian team to be sent to Europe for training.

In Norway, just two weeks after her 15th birthday, Anne won the Holmenkollen Giant Slalom competing against the world's top skiers. The same season she placed 9th in the World Downhill at Aare, Sweden, and was 7th in the slalom. A week later at the Arlberg Kandahar, she was 5th in slalom.

On January 31, 1955, Anne suffered a bad fracture of the left leg while practicing slalom at Mt. Tremblant and was in a cast for six months. However, in 1956, still handicapped by her injury, she placed 15th in the Combined, at the Cortina Olympics and placed 9th, the top North American, in the Arlberg-Kandahar at Sestriere, Italy.

Anne remained in North America for the 1957 season, winning every race she entered in Canada and the U.S.A., only to sprain an ankle at Aspen, Colorado, while training for the U.S. Nationals and was out for the balance of the season. Overseas again in 1958, for the F.I.S. World Championships, Anne placed 6th in Combined scoring, and then went on to take 3rd place in the Holmenkollen. The following winter, Anne wound up her European tour by winning the St. Moritz White Ribbon tournament and the Arlberg-Kandahar; then returned to Canada and won all three events of the Quebec-Kandahar and the Canadian Alpine Championships.

Rated among the Gold Medal favorites for the 1960 Olympics, Anne suffered a severe cut by a shovel wielded by a workman while practicing at Grindenwald. This set her back in the early events of the European races. However, after a week's rest at home, Anne won the U. S. National Slalom and Giant Slalom Championships at Alta, Utah, and swept three events of the Roch Cup at Aspen, Colorado. She then went to Squaw Valley to win the Olympic and F.I.S. Gold Medals for Slalom and the F.I.S. Gold Medal for Alpine Combined and become ranked as the top alpine skier of 1960.

Anne Heggveit was the first non-European to win the F.I.S. Gold Medal for Alpine Combined as well as the Arlberg-Kandahar, and she was the first Canadian to win an Olympic Gold Medal in skiing. She was awarded the Lou Marsh Trophy as Canada's Outstanding Athlete of 1960.

Becoming an Olympic Gold Medalist had long been Anne's major goal. She recalls having watched Canada's Barbara Ann Scott return to Ottawa as the Figure Skating Olympic Gold Medalist of 1948.

"If I had to pick the greatest influence of my ski career," she relates, "I would say it was the day I watched Barbara Ann Scott come home to Ottawa. I was nine. We had a school holiday and all the kids from our class were taken to see Barbara ride into town. I can remember looking up at her in the car and vowing to myself: 'This is it; this is what I want to be; this is what I want to do!' I never deviated from that."

Anne's retirement from ski racing became a fact on October 1, 1960, when she told a Toronto Globe reporter: "I know I'm going to miss a lot. The training. The excitement of the races. The friends I made on the ski circuit. But I had to face realities, you know. You can't go on forever in competitive athletics. And particularly skiing."

"Skiing," she continued, "is more than a sport. It's a way of life. At least, it was for me. In skiing you're always working toward that one perfect mental and physical peak. You see, there was always a big race to win every year I was competing. The Arlberg-Kandahar was a goal. The Olympics were a goal."

Anne Heggveit Hamilton was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1976.